

Ge to invest in b.C. firm's wind project

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A unit of General Electric Co. plans to invest \$40 million in a wind-energy project being developed in northern B.C. by Finavera Wind Energy Inc., the small developer said on Tuesday.

GE Energy Financial Services has agreed to the indicative terms of an equity investment in a 77-megawatt Wildmare project that Finavera plans to build near Chetwynd.

The long-awaited news propelled Finavera's stock 20-percent higher on the TSX Venture Exchange.

Finavera, a \$40-million company, surprised Canada's renewable energy industry last March when it won the most 25-year power purchase contracts in B.C.'s clean-electricity power award.

The Wildmare project is one of four wind developments by Finavera in the province. They are expected to cost \$800 million to develop.

Under the proposed deal with GE, Finavera will retain a 30-per cent stake in the Wildmare project, although GE will pay \$40 million for 100 per cent of the equity. A further \$160 million in debt will be raised together by the partners.

"We have spent a whole bunch of development dollars and taken the risk, said Finavera chief executive Jason Bak. "Now it's being rewarded with this 30-per-cent stake."

Finavera's stock was 27 cents higher, or up by a fifth, at \$1.59 on Tuesday afternoon.

Bak expects to reach a final agreement with GE in the next two months. The announcement of a partner had been expected since last Fall but talks dragged on longer than expected.

Finavera is also in talks with GE on partnering on its other wind farms, the 47-megawatt Tumbler Ridge, 117-megawatt Meikle and 60-megawatt Bullmoose wind-energy projects, Bak said.

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